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# On the Move: Exploring Cultural Mobility

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**W**orking abroad for one or two years – that is the dream of many cultural managers. But what happens with/in the life of these *cultural guest workers*? What marks do they leave on their places of activity? What experiences have they gained and which ones will they take along with them? This publication aims to describe some of the impact of mobility in the cultural management sector in Europe – on a personal level, but in a broader perspective as well: How do the guest institutions and the organizations involved cooperate with their temporary staff? How are projects planned, developed and refined? Which specific professional experience do the mobile cultural managers gain? And, we ask how surrounding conditions and the current educational situation in the sector correlate with the actual working conditions and professional requirements. All this happens under the embracing heading called *cultural exchange*. Beyond a universal culture-mix and within an announcement of cultural diversity, we first and foremost see one thing: spaces offering enormous possibilities. We picture ways and places for encounters in their original sense.

The Robert Bosch Stiftung, a foundation based in Germany, made an attempt in supporting and stimulating cross-border cooperations and multi-lateral cultural activities by implementing programmes for cultural managers. Since 2002, the foundation has supported cultural exchanges in Europe by sending selected fellows to cultural institutions abroad for extended periods of time. The aim of the overall programme is to strengthen the network structures and intercultural competences of cultural operators in Europe.

We have chosen four different countries as examples, where young European cultural managers have been working: Germany, Hungary, Romania and Macedonia. It has always been important for us not only to track changes according to numbers and figures, but to keep an open mind and eye for the detail. In the end, Europe and thus its cultural landscape does consist of a plenitude of little moments, contacts and exchanges.

With this publication we wish to initiate a discussion about cultural projects and networks, about the job outline of artists and cultural operators, but also about the sense and senselessness of existing logics in funding and awarding grants. Our understanding is: Exchange, without any doubts, is profitable in all respects. Therefore, we need framework conditions and paths to be walked on.

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**Antje Kohlrusch and Ciprian Marinescu**

# Cultural Mobility – Myth and Practice

**Few elements of the European “chemistry mix” enjoy as much popularity as the concept of mobility. In high politics, mobility almost enjoys the status of “the condition of possibilities” among the famous European liberties. The Erasmus exchange programme is simple and big, European and individual; it operates systematically and also as an agent in establishing as well as refining the European education area. Keyword: Bologna.**

By **GOTTFRIED WAGNER**

The myth of mobility suffers from quite a few drawbacks. We just need to look at the mobility of financial capital. Thriving and deterioration are more and more dependent on the success of a fast circulation of money. Innovative, derivative, yet possibly absolute fictional exchange titles leave big questions: thanks to mobility and technology, rotten values can accumulate and destroy astronomical assets in a matter of seconds.

Mobility is also referred to as a demographical threat, utilized politically and abused in populist ways: Migration is the Medea-programme of globalization. In fact, millions and millions of people, refugees or economic migrants, are on their way, often due to forces beyond their individual control and people are going to be moving along these paths as long as inequality causes this form of mobility.

Of course, there are thousands of success stories about modern economic migration and mobility from the poor margins to the rich centres. But if we look at the electoral potential as benchmark, the consensus threatens to topple. This has to do with mobility in a downward direction in the (still) affluent societies of the North West.

One component of the Janus-faced character of modern mobility is the drifting apart of the winners of globalization and mobility on the one hand and of the broad phalanx of the ones left behind by these forces on the other. The ideological set pieces for these factors are liberalism, authoritarianism, transnational networking or national narrowness culminating in the resurgence of neo-nationalism.

There is a remedy for such fetishizing of mobility: the trans-national localization of artists and intellectuals allows them to reflect on their experiences of mobility from textual points of view. Artists are also mobile, even if they stay where they are; they have the courage to listen to those whose destinies were driven by mobility; they (re)-create the world without caring for neither their origin nor their destination. Their mobility is geared towards a future global society that, thinking utopian, aims for the well-being of all beyond the possession of identity cards. Artists' mobility contributes to a post-national community and by virtue of their productivity can act as a force that criticises certain forms of oppression. Cooperation, that emerges from that and is stimulated by exposure, makes sense through the work of art and creates meaning. Especially the young, the creative who are fighting with the precarious, need encouragement and support: this would be a good investment in the future.

For a long time, such considerations have induced private sponsors to finance mobility fellowships. National agencies are often interested in keeping up a good creative performance via cultural export or by strengthening their position within the market by acquiring creative guest workers. Also, these kinds of programmes can quietly generate paradoxes, because gaining experience makes you wiser.

European cultural mobility programmes have been introduced only much later. As the main obstacle for a creative version of Erasmus, a lack of similar institutions (universities) and their competences in project

execution can be identified. The logic immanent to the system, i.e. that EU administration does not have the possibilities to manage smaller funding budgets, might be another obstacle. Also private sponsors, especially foundations, need to keep lean management and transparency as well as a good mix of openness and programmatic setting of priorities and the European dimensions in mind, if they do not want to proceed on the beaten tracks of national patterns.

It is very popular to combine mobility with some form of temporary duration: artists in residence programmes; summer schools; twinings; capacity building etc. There is no doubt that residencies offer more room for content-orientated cooperation that goes beyond mere initiation. They unburden the artist from financial worries for some time. They allow intensity and continuity. It seems that European forms of cultural surplus value can be explained by that. Another form of raising the profiles of mobility programmes is a regional focus, for instance on Central and Eastern Europe, and more recently on Arab countries. What remains important here is, to demonstrate and present the value of mobility programmes by a continuous practice, which pushes and promotes an advocacy for the European idea.

The intrinsic value of cultural mobility must never be depreciated. In that sense, this publication is a good thing, because it promises to deepen the knowledge about a certain kind of mobility that supports freedom and the art of trans-nationality. Cultural management as an instance of practical reason creates the framework needed by people working in the creative field in order to be made (public) and to circulate. It withdraws into the background, leaving the stage for the actual creative act, although it is in full possession of knowledge concerning clients, media exposure and market factors. Mobility for the cultural management, that needs to earn money – for the artist and the manager – means opening up to (international) markets, touring with projects that are marketable. For good managers art is never only a means, but always end in itself as well.

Mobility of cultural managers helps to initiate transnational projects and to put the know-how-transfer into practice – also as compensatory processes of civil societies between regions, institutions, contexts that have already made their marks and others that are in the process of development. A practical ethos is essential here: to remain curious and not relapse into neo-imperialism. This includes a spirit of cooperation and establishing structures that appeal to those who can afford it – reciprocity, for instance, or support of uncommon, yet necessary motion. In order to make the smaller programmes palatable to potential big public sponsors, we need to bet on the magical word and the reality of multiplication. After all, cultural policy mobility concepts should be effective within today's societies, as an endeavour to improve the vertical participatory mobility of those richly experienced in different /other ways, but not yet holding their place in the directors' offices and curators' circles.

Mobility as Janus: Europe, according to its self-conception, is the place where differences and contradictions on the subject of mobility should be negotiated democratically in the interest of all. Clever mobility programmes that serve the ones, who are experienced, and surpass the mere travelling, should evoke experiences beyond the borders in the heads. Artists are skillful in the search for and the creation of meaning. Clever cultural management creates the necessary framework for them.

In this respect, I wish that this publication will provide its share in stimulating debates about mobility, so that ultimately a trans-nationality may evolve not based on fetishes and the magic of numbers and figures, but more focused on the inner dimension of mobility and, of course, that the spirit to fund projects in the arts sector does not wane.

This text solely reflects the author's opinions.

# The German Cultural Centre in the capital of the Romanian Revolution

The Romanian Revolution broke out in Timișoara in 1989. You can still hear Hungarian, German, Serbian, French, Italian, Spanish on the streets of the same city. And Romanian. There is a unique cultural place in the city that houses a Romanian-, German- and Hungarian language theatre as well as the opera. In this neighbourhood the German Cultural Centre Timișoara has now existed for a decade.

By CIPRIAN MARINESCU, photo by ADRIAN PÎCLIȘAN  
Translated from Romanian by ANDREEA DINCĂ



The German Cultural Centres in Timișoara, Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca, Iași and Brașov were founded by the Romanian-German Cultural Societies as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), whose members worked for universities and local authorities in the early 2000s. These societies were supposed to assist in finding appropriate premises and function as legal bodies of the cultural centres.

In 2002, the German Cultural Centre Timișoara evolved as a public/private partnership between the Romanian-German Society Timișoara, the German Foreign Ministry, financing the daily activities of the centre, and the Robert Bosch Stiftung, a Germany-based foundation, covering the costs for the managing directors of the centres sent as part of the “Cultural Managers in Central and Eastern Europe” programme and also by financing cultural projects to some degree.

The centres in Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca and Timișoara each benefitted from the assignment of three cultural managers of the Robert Bosch Stiftung; in Timișoara namely Senta Höfer (2002-05), Johanna Holst (2005-08) and Silke Krummel (2008-10). Alina Baciú, who was a member of the centre since its inauguration, became managing director in March 2010. One of the most difficult tasks that all directors of the centre, but Senta Höfer, Johanna Holst and Alina Baciú in particular, had to face was the search for suitable premises.

## 10 years ago

Senta Höfer came to Timișoara in 2002 when the German Cultural Centre was founded. Her job was to build up and establish the centre and make it work. It all began under very simple conditions in the basement of the Santa Maria Foundation, where there was only room for language courses. In 2003, the cultural centre moved to Augustin Pacha str. in the heart of the city. Even though the entrance was a bit hidden, the new premises allowed for a library to be set up and cultural events like exhibitions, readings and screenings to be held. All was received very well by the people in Timișoara.

Alina Baciú began to work at the centre as a volunteer and was soon engaged as a cultural advisor. She says that Senta Höfer taught her how to run an institution. The basis for her way up the career ladder to her current position as the institute’s managing director was laid.

## An approach from four different angles

When Alina Baciú talks about her predecessors, she introduces their agendas without comparing them. About the Senta Höfer-era she claims that it was a time when the focus was on the introduction of well-known artists and the taste of the masses. Johanna Holst, according to Alina, put her focus on the young, after all “this reflects the recent direc-

tion of the cultural policy in Germany, the attempt to address the young people, thus reaching a wider audience.” Although Alina did not work with Silke Krummel (between 2006 and 2010 she took a break from work at the Cultural Center), she claims that it was much harder for Silke, in comparison with Senta and Johanna, to adjust to the circumstances: “I think for Silke it was most difficult to learn what Romanian bureaucracy and legislation can mean with regard to the personnel and the NGOs.”

#### **A new financial start**

In 2010, the Robert Bosch Stiftung stopped sending cultural managers to Timișoara. The position of managing director was advertised and Alina applied for it and was given the chance to implement her own vision and ideas. But at the same time it meant the loss of two important financial resources: one was the salary for the managing director and the other were parts of the project funds that the cultural managers could provide as fellows. Both were previously paid for by the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

In 2002 the German Cultural Centre Timișoara started off with the full financial support of the German Foreign Ministry. Some minor supporting contributions existed as well. There was for example the revenue from the language courses which was used for advertising purposes. The funds covered the administrative costs, but since 2006 this support was no longer available to that extent. The Foreign Ministry now supported by indirect means: projects of the cultural centre were funded via the Goethe-Institut and by the local authorities via invitations to tender. The rent and salaries of the employees needed to be paid from the earnings from the language courses. The centre became self-financed. During those difficult times, the language department grew. Between

2008 and 2009, the demand for language courses rose rapidly, so that the function room was converted into another teaching room, thus putting the cultural events in the background. “Taking over as the new director was not easy for me”, explains Alina. “Whereas, I was busy in those days with the renewal of the infrastructure and the great demand for language courses, currently I try to put the focus in culture again that had to suffer due to the reasons mentioned above. I am trying to get the centre on the right track, although this proves to be a long-term task.”

#### **The Centre remains in the centre**

A few years ago they were again searching for new premises: the old building showed structural defects, mould afflicted the books and there were not enough rooms for language courses and cultural events. The top priority for managing director Alina Baciuc in search for new premises was, that the German Cultural Centre was to remain in the city centre. By the end of September 2011 the cultural centre moved to Dr. Liviu Gabor st. 1 close to the Victory Square. By now, the cultural centre has six employees and ten language teachers. But there is still not enough space to host cultural events. This is why these mainly take place outside the house. In 2012, the German Cultural Centre Timișoara celebrates its 10th anniversary. On this occasion all people are invited who shaped and helped establish the German Cultural Centre.

#### **A flight in the opposite direction**

Alexandru Mihăescu and Andra Vaida, both from Timișoara, spent 13 months as fellows of the “Cultural managers from Central and Eastern Europe programme” in Germany. In October 2007, Alexandru Mihăescu’s “German antics” ended, whilst Andra Vaida began her “sabbatical” at the Trans-Media Academy Hellerau in Dresden.

For both the residency in Germany was the opportunity to compare two cultures and two work methods. Andra noticed great differences between the public sector and the one under private law in both countries. Alexandru was surprised by “the sublime standardization of language”, the methodology and the “applications in the cultural management sector” in Germany.

Andra is experienced in working with Romanian cultural associations where the main focus lies on project work. She describes differences in the way instruments of cultural management are applied. “In Germany the planning and preparation for a project is much more detailed and structured. This need to control is a very German thing for me, but it introduces a greater rigour, when a project is being implemented, hence giving you a feeling of reliability and safety. In Romania, where society is rather unstable, uncertainty and moments of surprise are the normality. Thus, the focus of the work lies in solving problems, which makes the implementation of the planning process more difficult.”

Alexandru is not so bothered by the slow planning phase. He is rather depressed by the poor funding opportunities for the independent scene and the lack of chances for the young to get into public structures and state organisations. He applied for a job in an executive position at a theatre in Romania. Unsuccessfully. “There are problems with the cooperation between non-public institutions such as associations and independent artist groups and the municipality. Such was the case in 2007 and it still is. That leads to little dynamics within the cultural scene”, Alexandru claims.

#### **The further travel**

After her fellowship had ended, Andra returned to Romania full of verve and ready to work as an independent cultural manager. She did not want to look for occupation as an employee in the public sector. But the reality looked quite different: “In a Romania, unexpectedly hit by the financial crisis my enthusiasm missed its aim. Sometimes, adjusting to a less organized and structured working method can be very frustrating. I had to understand and accept, that many things here just do not work the way they are working in Germany. I found myself in the position to become more flexible, which did me good.”

Alexandru was similarly not really looking for permanent employment: he works as freelancer. Maybe there will be moments when he will prefer being in permanent employment. Time will tell.

# Things around the centre have come full circle

Senta Höfer, born in Bucharest, which she left when she was 17, is programme leader of the Diplomat's College and the International Diplomats Programme at the German Society for Foreign Policy (DGAP). Between 1998 and 2001, Senta Höfer was Project Advisor/Consultant at UN refugee organisation (UNHCR) in Croatia and at the information centre of the United Nations in Bonn. Between 2002 and 2005, she worked in Romania where she established and managed the German Cultural Centre Timișoara as a fellow of the programme Robert Bosch Cultural Managers in Central and Eastern Europe.

Ciprian Marinescu spoke to the alumna.

*Why did you apply for a fellowship in Romania in 2002?*

Maybe it sounds a tad solemn but I always wanted to go back to Romania to contribute to the country's development and at the same time do something that would help me move on. Moreover, culture has always been my cup of tea and development work is my passion anyway.

*How did you perceive your role in Timișoara? What, in your opinion, had to be done during the first three years?*

It was not clear to me at that time. I was commissioned to establish a German Cultural Centre, but I did not know what to expect there. I was told that the premises were perfect for a cultural centre. Well, that was not the case. All the rooms were in the basement. The reception room did not have any windows and the two other rooms, one of them was the library, was damp. Obviously, we had to move as soon as possible – that was of utmost priority. I established the centre step by step and had to be flexible in every respect. The time was incredibly instructive for me. With hindsight, I am satisfied, but I could not have possibly said what it would look in three years time. Is that even possible in Romania? *(laughs)*

*Before coming to Romania you worked in Croatia for three years. Did you always feel the need to explore other cultures?*

Yes, of course. I was never only fixated on Germany.

*Is that still the case?*

Viscerally, yes. But the situation has changed. Our children attend school here in Berlin and they are very attached to this city. But my attitude and my preferences have not changed.

*In Croatia and Romania you were accompanied by your husband and your children. Did you have the feeling that you had to decide between job and family and that you neglected something?*

I am just wondering, if a man would get asked the same kind of question... It is normal for me. It always has been this way, but still I very much appreciate it. Needless to say that it is not always easy, but in the end it depends on what expectations you have for yourself, the time with your family, your job. I am lucky to have a husband who has been very supportive. Unfortunately, that is still the exception, and hence people often ask about it.

*How do you feel about the Cultural Centre now it is celebrating its 10th anniversary?*

First and foremost I am glad, that it still exists! And that Alina Baciu, my closest colleague back then, now manages the institution is wonderful. Of course, I could comment on this and that and could think about who could have done things differently at a certain time, but that is not the point here. The positive feeling predominates.

# A time for challenges

From 2008 to 2010 Stefanie Hübner has worked as Robert Bosch Cultural Manager at the International Elias Canetti Society in Ruse / Bulgaria. Then she commenced her employment as subject specialist for Cultural Education at the Kultursekretariat NRW (Nordrhein-Westfalen) in Gütersloh. Since October 2011 she has been working as a Project Coordinator for the State Association Cultural Youth Education Thuringia e.V. Thus she is responsible for the voluntary social year and the federal voluntary service in the cultural and educational sector in Thuringia.

Antje Kohlrusch spoke to the alumna.

*Why did you apply for a scholarship and not look for an internship or employment at that time?*

I knew about several mobility programmes of cultural and educational intermediaries in the external area while doing my MA in European Studies in Berlin. I had heard of the “Robert Bosch Stiftung's lectureship program” and also had a closer look at the programmes of the Institute of Foreign Relations (ifa). I did not want to work as an intern anymore, but at the same time felt that I was not qualified enough for the job market.

*What did you miss after finishing your postgraduate degree?*

I was lacking the comprehensive knowledge in cultural management, theoretically and practically. I have to admit, I had gained some insight into various areas of cultural work in the course of my first degree in Theatre studies and Russian studies in Leipzig and also through internships, but that proved to be insufficient. What had particularly caught my interest in the programme “Robert Bosch Cultural Managers” was the comprehensive support, the reflection of one's own progress, the accompanying continuous education and advanced training. It became clear in the interview, that that was exactly what I had been looking for: cultural work both in theory and practice, personal challenges and targeted support.

*Looking at your current position: Is there anything in your approach to work and your expertise that distinguishes you from your “immobile” colleagues? What kind of knowledge do they possibly have that you may not share?*

In cooperation with the adolescents here who want

to get their feet into the cultural sector, I can develop a lot of empathy for them. When I hear that someone wants to go abroad, I can tell them I have already done that, which may encourage them to translate their own wishes into plans and goals. My colleagues sometimes lack the understanding that you can aim to go literally much further than the next town or city. Also, I have an understanding of the structure of organizations facing financial uncertainties. Improvisation and problems suddenly emerging are much less of a strain for me than for my colleagues and they do not question the organizational overall concept “association”. I feel I have broad experiences in dealing with authorities and writing applications.

*What does it mean personally that you had been mobile?*

My search for personal challenges was quite successful. Nevertheless, it was a phase, and now I have entered a new stage where stable private and personal structures have become more important: being close to friends and family, the everyday environment. I have deliberately decided against another mobile career at the Goethe-Institut.

*Which traces have you left at your organization in Ruse?*

I am happy to visit the website of the Canetti Society, for which I have been responsible in terms of content or to know that projects and series of events initiated by me are still running, that a piece of “organizational memory” still exists in folders in everyday life. And, of course, there are amicable connections with Ruse. A friend from Ruse now lives pretty close: in Weimar.



## Advantages on both sides

As an institution that strengthens the idea of interdisciplinary work Hellerau, the European Center for the Arts in Dresden, is intent to connect with artists and art mediators from Europe and adjacent countries. Thus it benefits from the insider contacts foreign mobile cultural managers such as the fellow Vazeh Mustafa from Azerbaijan can contribute.

By LARS MÜLLER, photos by TONI KLEMM

With a head full of ideas and sheer infinite vigour, Vazeh Mustafa arrived in Saxonia in October 2011. His destination: Hellerau – The European Center for the Arts in Dresden. But financial and conceptual constraints of a professionally organized German stage slowed things down for the 27 year old Azerbaijani. The fellow of the foundation Robert Bosch Stiftung was forced to become a spectator by production manager Andreas Lorenz. “I had to go to four performances a week at the minimum”, recalls Mustafa. That was important in order to familiarize himself with the concept of the institution with its main focus on modern dance and contemporary music. Afterwards the aspiring cultural manager was involved in current and ongoing productions of the “Kids on Stage” festival and he is currently working on his own project to be put on stage in autumn this year. “I commissioned new work for five young composers from my home country”, Mustafa explains in perfect German while lighting a cigarette during coffee break. The composers are studying in Western Europe and the USA and committed to contemporary music. Thus they fit perfectly into Hellerau’s repertoire. “I know all composers personally from Baku. They have got what it takes for an international career”, Mustafa says with confidence. The trained environmental technician has worked on an oil platform and organized cultural events and festivals for contemporary music in his home country in the last two years, mainly on a voluntary basis, he claims.

Even with his experience, the lateral entrant had to refine his concept, which he brought to Hellerau last autumn, in order for the performances to attract enough spectators to the Hellerau Festival Theatre in

half year’s time. It is the Artistic direction that ultimately has to decide on the program actually shown. After all, the work of the Azerbaijani fellow should comply with the standards of the institution. Its presentation is planned within the scope of “Tonlagen – Dresden Festival of Contemporary Music” in October 2012, a festival whose origins in Dresden date back to the year 1986. A symbiosis between German musicians of the house ensemble “Courage” and the Azerbaijani composers is envisaged, says Head of Production Lorenz, who met Mustafa in Baku a while ago. Lorenz obviously trusts the artistic instinct of his protégé. Moreover, the theatre benefits from Mustafa’s contacts to the independent scene of his Islamic informed home country. “A presentation of works by composers from Azerbaijan would simply not take place in Hellerau without Vazeh”, says Lorenz. The independent art scene is only marginally developed in the successor states of the former Soviet Union. Countries still being ruled in dictatorial style and a conservative, classical education based on socialist values, hamper the development of artists, says Lorenz. “We have almost no relations with and contacts to those countries.” Hitherto there have been no offers from the CIS region that could comply to the artistic standards in Hellerau. And yet the festival theatre does not present any art from abroad that has been approved of only by the respective governmental institutions. Mustafa confirms those problems exist in his home country. Artists are allowed to travel abroad, but at home the Alijwe regime critically observes the independent art scene. Spontaneous performances in front of an audience can be regarded as demonstrations against the system. “You are either

in favour of or against the government”, says Mustafa pensively. But these restrictions, according to Lorenz’s observations, only lead to artists producing particularly progressive art as a means of getting recognized abroad.

With a view to Eastern Europe, the Head of Production in Hellerau, who has been part of the European cultural scene both as a sound engineer and as a journalist for decades now, especially sees potential in the independent scene in the Ukraine with festivals in Lviv and Odessa, in Serbia and also in Croatia. Poland managed to bring forth a rich and multi-layered arts scene even through the “red times” which has survived until today. But you see him frown and become pessimistic, when thinking about the developments in Belarus, Russian and more recently, in Hungary.

Mustafa’s declared aim is to make the five Azerbaijani composers, whose works will be presented in Hellerau, popular all over Germany. Lorenz gives him enough space to visit other festivals, concert halls and stages nationwide and to establish new contacts in the art world.

The aspiring composers do not receive any fees for their work, but the chance to establish themselves in Germany. Usually there are musicologists and critics in the audience. So, there is a good chance that they take one or the other score with them, hence making follow-up jobs and performances possible. But the Azerbaijani composers also have to face the audience and their critical evaluation in Dresden. Direct contact between audience and artists, whenever it can be arranged, is an essential part of Hellerau’s philosophy. Before Vazeh Mustafa began his placement here, there were four other fellows from Lithuania, Romania, Bosnia and Slovakia working for the Dresden stage. All with their own projects, all could leave their marks and set trends in the current repertoire, says Lorenz. Meanwhile, he describes the support situation as being reasonable. However, the cultural managers have to work as part of the team and, of course, must have a very good command of German.

Nowadays, it is impossible to be talking about the internationally acknowledged cultural scene in Dresden without mentioning the Hellerau Festival Theatre. The latter one deliberately positions itself in marked distinction to the baroque style of the reconstructed old town in the contemplative and close to nature colony Hellerau in the north of Dresden.

Hellerau – European Center for the Arts in Dresden – comprehends itself as an interdisciplinary and international centre for contemporary art, which encompasses all genres: music, musical theatre, dance, theatre, performance art, new media, digital art, fine arts, and literature. The main focus lies on contemporary dance, contemporary music and new media, explains the spokeswoman of the institution, Katja Solbrig. The house looks back upon an eventful history: It was built in 1911 as an addition to the garden city and the German workshops Hellerau after plans by Heinrich Tessenow. According to Solbrig, the myth of Hellerau is created by the spectacular effect of the festival theatre, its architecture as well as its charisma as an art place of modernity. Inspired by the life reform movement of the ending 19th century, Hellerau quickly became the “laboratory of modernity”. Until the outbreak of WWI, the house with its eponymous Summer Festival unfolded an atmosphere that is found to resonate to this day. Now, Hellerau again is known as the source of inspiration for architecture, contemporary expressive dance, modern design and the cradle of rhythmic education – even though for some time it had been used as military base. From 1945 until 1992 the building served as a profane barrack for the Soviet Army. First initiatives of a cultural resurrection and reappropriation of the historical place began after the withdrawal of the last soldiers of the Soviet army.

The premises became the home for various cultural institutions. Furthermore, the Free State of Saxonia funded restoration of the interior of the house, so that after two years the whole complex was ready to be re-opened for the public in September 2006.

Since 2003, the dance theatre ensemble Derevo has been a permanent resident in Hellerau, in 2004 the Forsythe Company received a permanent residency as well. And since 2009 the theatre has been hosting events throughout the whole course of the year. With the completion of the façade in October 2011, the renovation and restoration of the festival theatre has been finished.

The future path for the house seems to be defined. “Hellerau now draws on the heydays of its early years”, says spokeswoman Solbrig. With good reason the institute sees itself as one of the most important interdisciplinary centres of contemporary art in Germany and Europe. The mobility of the cultural managers plays a significant role in this.





# Power Politics instead of Cultural Policy

**Contents and orientations of cultural policy are the subject of public dialogue and political negotiations. Now, in the 2010s, the cards are dealt out with different criteria in Hungary: The government massively exerts influence on the definition of art and culture. How do internationally versed cultural managers deal with that situation?**

By **ÁGNES SEBESTYÉN**

*I am sorry that I cannot write anything positive or more promising about the current Hungarian cultural policy:* These were my emotions when I was trying to summarize my opinion and those of a fellow and an alumnus of the Robert Bosch Stiftung's programme "Cultural Managers from Central and Eastern Europe", Katalin Erdődi and Gábor Törőcsik. It may sound histrionic, but it seems that the Hungarian cultural policy contributes towards the international mobility of the players of the Hungarian art and cultural scene in a counterproductive way by indirectly forcing them to work or to apply for fellowships abroad, because working conditions have become increasingly unbearable and absurd.

"*Hey Europe, sorry about my minister president*", was written on a banner often showed by the press held up during the demonstrations against the official commencement of the new Hungarian constitution, that is called "Basic Law of Hungary" and has erased the word "Republic" from the official name of the country. "Heroes, Kings and Saints" was the title of the exhibition, that had been the final straw, which made me decide to take unpaid and indefinite leave as employee of the Hungarian National Gallery and to follow my husband to Switzerland. The exhibition was to rever the new constitution: voluminous historical oil paintings that were complemented by 15 contemporary pieces of art depicting events in the more recent Hungarian history, among them the signing of the new constitution. The president appointed a PR consultant of the governing party as a curator who commissioned the illustrations for the Basic Law. Apart from the ineffably bad quality of

the so-called artworks, their rather "care-free" interpretation of history and the way the exhibition was curated should have provoked resistance among the research assistants of the National Gallery. Nothing happened, which I found very unsettling.

What led to protests in the end was a decision made in the highest circles of the government: Without any reasonable explanation or consultation with the responsible ministerial department the Hungarian National Gallery was closed as an independent institution. This was planned for the 29th February 2012. But the day came and in spite of the immense public interest in the event, the fusion with the Museum of Fine Arts was called off for an indefinite period of time, one day before the planned date of the merger. The director, Ferenc Csák, had already given up his post at the beginning of the year; further employees were sacked or had resigned. In my opinion these events, that occurred very close to me, show the characteristics typical of the current Hungarian cultural policy: a strong tendency towards centralization, the disregard of specialist committees when passing bills, short-term and unrealistic government plans whose implementation is doomed to fail very soon as well as random interventions in institutional structures and programmes in the name of an undefined national-conservative value system.

"The theatre in Eger (a small town in the north-eastern part of Hungary) always belonged to the most interesting regional institutions in Hungary: all awards and reviews prove that", Gábor Törőcsik, former fellow of the Robert Bosch Cultural Manag-

ers, says. "The main credits for that go to the former directors who were replaced in 2011 by someone who, with the help of the new local political elite, transformed this innovative place into a classical national popular theatre in no time, literally", Gábor complains. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case: we only need to think about the case of the New Theatre in Budapest, which was reviewed in the German media and led to protests throughout Europe, but without any ramifications.

In spite of the massive governmental interventions in the working of the most important cultural institutions, it seems that cultural policy only plays a secondary role. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs was closed immediately after the inauguration of the new government two years ago and transformed into a State Secretariat within the Ministry of National Resources, which also hosts the secretariats of education, health, social affairs and sports. At the same time there were major cuts in funding, which hit the educational and cultural sector harder than any other: statist cultural institutions were confronted with cuts between 20 and 40 percent of their funding; important municipal institutions were closed down arbitrarily and necessary support programmes were discontinued. For example, approx. 30 percent of the staff of the Hungarian National Gallery was made redundant, the Hungarian National Museum had to reduce opening times by one day per week, and smaller museums even have to close during the winter in order to save energy. Non-governmental institutions of the independent arts and cultural scene that counted on the annual project funds were affected most. So, despite public protest, the independent cultural center and artistic residency "Tűzraktér" – whose activities had been awarded the "EUREGIO Innovation award" in 2006 and the "Pro Urbe Budapest" prize 2010 – was closed in March 2011 due to the unrealistically high rent charges, the organization could not afford to pay any longer.

Gábor Törőcsik, inter alia chairman of the association "Part" (the shore) based in Eger, says, that even though they have always been working with a very small budget, the cessation of the so-called PANKKK funding programme (programme for national contemporary music) hit them very hard. Their events, which mainly attract local sub-cultures, can only be continued by increasingly relying on personal and private commitment.

Katalin Erdődi, former fellow of the Robert Bosch Cultural Managers and founding member of the "Artopolis association" and initiator of the project "PLACCC", an international festival for Art in Public Spaces, says that they survive on project funds, thus very much threatened by the current cultural-political tendencies. "Since 2008, we participated in three cooperations funded by the EU Culture Programme. The necessary equity ratio was ensured by the National Cultural funds. It looks like this virtually automatic funding will be scraped", she moans. Innovative projects can no longer be accomplished without international funding, but the government seems to put no value on supporting these kinds of initiatives. "Admittedly, the equity ratio funding programme was exemplary, but it only funded EU cooperations which is only a fraction of the international possibilities. It would be important to acknowledge that a complementary support of international cooperations would have a multiplier effect on the cultural sector", Katalin thinks.

Unfortunately, the Hungarian cultural policy seems to set other priorities. There have been special grants, that encourage cooperations with Hungarian minorities of the neighbouring countries for quite some time, but since the change of government emphasis on them has increased disproportionately. The actual reason of this funding seems to be a securing of political allies: regional press reports that institutions and organizations received funding that cultivate close relationships with Hungaria's ruling party. "This tendency unjustly distorts the international orientation of the cultural policy and prevents international networking", Katalin argues.



# Capital vs. Province: Why less is often more

In Hungary, its capital Budapest is said to be the centre of political and cultural life. Everything else is provincial. Within this contradiction, cultural managers have discovered amazing things and report on creative spaces and mobile corridors.

By KATJA MELZER and AXEL HALLING  
photos by BÁLINT RÁDÓCZY

Each non-Hungarian person who has to do with the country for some time will not escape country-specific lectures by some of its inhabitants: Hungary, historically speaking, was much bigger and much more important than it is today; Unicum, a herbal schnapps, is an extraordinary remedy and everything else apart from the capital is *province*.

The Hungarian province: At first glance, numbers seem to confirm the prejudice: Budapest has 1.6 million inhabitants, the next biggest city Debrecen only 200,000. Pécs, the European Capital of Culture 2010, only ranks fifth place with 156,000 residents, after Miskolc and Szeged. But the numbers tell little about the city's actual urbanity. A Hungarian city with 100,000 people feels like a German city with five times the inhabitants. On the one hand, this may be explained by the population density in Hungary: it is approx. 107 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> compared to 225 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> in Germany, which increases the importance of the regional centres. On the other hand, a relatively high local density of cultural assets, players and institutions fulfills important roles in these cities. Especially Pécs surprises visitors, when its relatively small number of inhabitants is compared with the infrastructural density in the city's cultural sector. There are a large number of museums, theatres, cinemas and secondary schools and universities with an artistic focus in teaching. Furthermore the city has a lot of active societies such as music, sports students, art and minority clubs and associations and it is situated close to several national borders.

## Structural challenges

What are the arguments for and against cultural work in the provinces? Can sustainable cultural-related structures in the hinterland compete with the metropolis Budapest? There are apparent disadvantages: A smaller town has, in absolute figures, a fraction of the resources to sustain cultural actors and institutions than a city ten times its size. There are fewer possibilities to reach people, for instance via the media, as well as a smaller number of potential audience and target groups, leave alone the small amount of input from outside via organized cultural programmes, institutions or individuals. There are only a small number of sponsors, and it is often difficult to explain to them that cultural work needs subsidizing, although one can observe a rich cultural infrastructure in relation to the numbers of inhabitants. However, the high fluctuation of cultural players who often leave the provinces after a few years proves to be a major drawback. The structural bipolarity also requires that a number of decisions related to culture are not made locally, but in the capital.

**Advantage 1: Networking and finding partners for projects is much easier in the province.** Proven methods for contact acquisitions (use of the local information channels via official authorities, media and the personally used pyramid scheme), also contacts with local cultural stars firmly rooted in their environment, can help finding the right partners for projects quickly and easily. Because of the man-



ageability of such a small scene, it is much easier to nurture your contacts there than in the metropolis. Therefore, it is more important when choosing your project partners to synchronize the interests and the quality for the aspired cooperation. In the province, the distinction between high and low culture is much more significant than in a diversified city.

**Advantage 2: Achieving good results with little money.** Even though financial sources are not gushing, you do not necessarily need much money to organize a programme. One to two hundred Euros of front-end financing are often enough to close gaps and help organizers to reimburse travel costs, to guarantee accommodation for several guests or to provide catering for a reception.

**Paying attention to local working conditions.** In cooperation with cultural players and institutions, the framework conditions have to be constantly re-evaluated and considered. The variety of cultural players in Europe results from the partly extreme differences in economical, financial and legal working conditions. That means, that many artists are not only unable to make a living of their art; but moreover, it is almost impossible for them to pursue a sophisticated job (such as graphic designer). The same is valid for the few cultural managers, who try to organize events for artists. Funds for positions in event management are rare and access to the relevant institutions by far exceeds the number of applicants. This means that the artists themselves work in the function of cultural managers, and producing art on their own initiative year after year and present it to audiences, which often also consist of fellow artists, but never being able to live of it. The advantages of living in the province, that means the low costs for living, is often counterweighed by the risk of the well-known dilemma of the self-sacrificing creative scene for which the local policy legitimizes a lack of support with the argument that there is no necessity (“it is working well the way it is!”).

**Advantage 3: The challenge of relatively small numbers of target audiences.** For whom are we creating cultural programmes? Where do we offer which form of programme? The strong differences in target group behaviour in European countries must be tak-

en into account such as vast differences in the financial means of students or their patterns of behaviour: For instance Hungarian students do not tend to stay for events over the weekend, because they prefer to travel back home. However, the search for target audiences is simplified by a close collaboration between museums, cinemas or artists’ associations that have a stable audience, and due to their limited funds, they are often willing to cooperate, if the contents of the events planned appeals to them.

**Assets and drawbacks at the same time: Everyone knows everyone.** The advantage of this means that there is less competition among the cultural players and that the cultural landscape is easier to overlook. Regional effective operating institutions such as secondary schools and universities as well as regional-specific institutions (like the one for ethnic minorities in Pécs) can provide strong impulses.

The sense of confinement can appear as a drawback. What is one to do in the absence of sympathies, if partners are nevertheless needed in order to succeed? One will easily find out: The province is more prone to people hooking up in cliques than the multifaceted metropolis. And, good relationships are essential in times of financial instability and crises.

**Conclusion.** Flexible and cost-effective models like cultural manager programmes offer possibilities to use the advantages of the province in contrast to the big city in order to produce cultural work of both high quality and diversity. The risks are also apparent: the guest institutions have to rely heavily on the cultural managers in terms of finance and the questions regarding the contents of the cultural work. Greater freedom and flexibility in choosing their guest institutions strengthens the position of the cultural managers and their respective cultural programmes. Unrealistic and exaggerated expectations of partner institutions and / or disappointments when it comes to the contents can be avoided.

Yet, there is no question about the reasonableness of cultural on-site tasks, which the province deserves in any case. Because the province is always both: frenzy and boredom, familiarity and diaspora, experimental lab and banality. To juggle with these contradictions is a rewarding challenge.

### “If the mountain will not come to Mohammed...”

“We wanted to open a place for art and music where we would also love to go”, said Ildikó Sándor (29) und Maja Hegyi (25) after having launched “Szoba” (engl. room), a function room for exhibitions, concerts and presentations in the centre of Pécs in summer 2010. Both are an example of the do-it-yourself mentality among young local cultural operators who produce alternative cultural programmes of their own accord and interest. They have no reservations about the capital, thus inviting artists from Budapest on a regular basis and receiving positive feedback throughout. Many creative people from the capital are aware that there is an interesting and diverse cultural life outside Budapest. Only the local audience proves to have difficulties with new and unfamiliar artists and is often seen to lack a certain curiosity.

Ervin Gúth, journalist for the local trendy magazine “Time Out Pécs”, confirms this view. All in all, the number and variety of cultural events leaves nothing to be desired, especially in comparison with other Hungarian towns. Yet occasionally, there is a lack in the quality of the products and the absence of a bigger, more interested audience that is also willing to pay for events. Thus, a task for temporary cultural managers could be to attract potential new and young audiences by offering and implementing participatory project schemes. This happens in Pécs mainly in cooperation with the university or in the form of projects taking place in public spaces outside the established cultural institutions. The necessity for joint action of local creative artists and producers seems to be obvious in smaller cities like Pécs in order to cope with organizational and financial hazards. There is heavy competition for potential new and young audiences. Whereas the founders of Szoba describe the collaboration with other organizers in positive terms and say that there is mutual assistance, Ervin Gúth sees the local cooperation as disorganized and, with a few exceptions, as being almost impossible. Here the intermediary role of a mobile cultural manager becomes clear. If you enter this microcosm with all its advantages, disadvantages and interpersonal sen-

sitivities from the outside, your status might entail the chance for an unbiased cooperation with different local partners such as a certain faculty of the university, a museum, a gallery, concerts etc. and to stimulate cooperation projects amongst each other to strengthen the local scene.

“Pécs is fantastic, but sometimes you just have to leave”. This sentence can often be heard from young cultural producers and creatives. If they have the opportunity, they will spend some month abroad and return to Pécs full of fresh ideas and with a boost of energy. Many who grew up and studied in Pécs, feel a strong connection with the city and want to actively shape it. The ethnic diversity that is mirrored in the cultural activities of the different minorities and the numerous students from abroad creates the feeling of an open climate in the city. This is a good basis for the implementation of international projects in Pécs. The established cultural institutions usually have strong partnerships with institutions and organizations abroad that received fresh impetus during the city’s time as European Cultural Capital in 2010. But institutions founded since then and the younger generation lack this access to both contacts and budgets.

Also, the temporary cultural manager can make decisive contributions at this point. S/he does not only bring already existing contacts with him/her, but relevant knowledge about possibilities for cooperation and funding as well. Hence, according to local conditions, new impulses can be given, long aspired cooperations and partnerships can be established, local partners can be linked together, and the local cultural scene can be overall strengthened.

# Little Global Cities. Discover Europe in a different way

Extensive and active networks of cultural managers can change cultural work and are important when it comes to the development of large and cross-border projects. The series of books "Little Global Cities" is an example of that. Located in 12 cities and 12 countries in Eastern Europe, the project could not have been established without the support of the exchange programmes of the Robert Bosch Cultural Managers.

By NATALIE KRONAST

In 2010, the idea to discover and explore European cities differently emerged at inter:est, an office for cultural projects founded by four former Robert Bosch Cultural Managers in 2006. The enterprise was indeed experimental: "Little Global Cities" introduces each of the participating cities in a trilingual book about the city. The books are to echo the view of the people who live and work in those cities, that is writers, artists and other inhabitants. In order to actually reach that goal, contacts with cultural mediators in those cities are essential: cultural managers who spread the idea and fill it with life. And they were found – not solely but mainly – in the network of cultural managers of the Robert Bosch Stiftung. In each city coordination teams were formed, that propose the contents of the books, browse and search for topics and places, choose participating artists and writers, accumulate material and establish contacts with the municipality, not to forget they inspire the whole city with the project. Thereby, the cultural managers effortlessly move between different worlds equipped with a cosmopolitan view on art and culture and accustomed to face intercultural challenges. It was very important for us to include as many people as possible in the development of the city books. Of course, it was a challenge to collect all the voices and to coordinate

the ideas and proposals. "The experiences I gained as a 'Robert Bosch Cultural Manager' and the networks I established helped me a lot with this", says Jelena Vukmanović, project leader of Little Global Cities in Novi Sad, Serbia. It was scheduled that four books were to be published every six months with the first ones to appear in 2010. But the project grew in the course of the joint cooperation. The initial idea of city maps has grown into books, that need a publishing company, a larger budget and more time for the layout. Hence, the time schedule changed; and so did the situation of the city coordinators: active cultural managers finished their fellowship, former ones who were working as freelancers found permanent employment. But all remained committed to the project.

The first city books were presented in mid-March 2012 – Novi Sad in Serbia, Osijek in Croatia, Szeged in Hungary and Timișoara in Romania. After a long phase of conception, preparation, accumulation of material and layouting the books, accompanied by lots of lean periods and all-nighters, it was celebration time. Our own Little Global Cities network has grown and eight more city books are waiting in the pipeline.

# After the "Game" in Tetovo

Berlin-based Silke Wittig started working as cultural manager as part of the Robert Bosch Stiftung's programme at the Centre for Balkan Cooperation "Loja" in Tetovo/Macedonia in 2010. What was her motivation to live and work in the Balkans, in a town where ethnic tensions between Albanians and Macedonians shape everyday life?

By CIPRIAN MARINESCU, photos by ADRIAN PÎCLIȘAN  
Translated from Romanian by ANDREEA DINCĂ

The Macedonian town of Tetovo is filled with people during the day, thus appearing much bigger than it actually is. Many people commute to work from the surrounding villages. In the evening they travel back home and the town gradually empties out. I arrive in Tetovo late in the evening. There are bars next to the hotel filled with men only. The next morning I meet up with Silke Wittig. In the hotel's restaurant she tells me about her everyday life in Tetovo, her work for "Loja" and that a single independent woman may experience peculiar moments when living and working in Tetovo.

The majority of people in Tetovo are Albanians. This is why the town is called the centre of the Albanian minority in Macedonia. Their actual number is uncertain, because the last census took place years ago. There are two colleges in Tetovo, but because the lectures and seminars are mainly held in Albanian, most of the Macedonians study in Skopje. There is very little actual cultural life in Tetovo. A house of culture does exist – you can find one in each town or city of former Yugoslavia – where events are being organized from time to time. But you will neither find a cinema nor a theatre.

## A fresh start for the cultural life

The Centre for Balkan Cooperation Loja was established 11 years ago by the stage director Bujar Luma who is still its managing director. Buja Luma tells me, how the name Loja, (engl. Game) came about while we were sitting in his small office with posters of two of his earlier productions on the wall. In 1999, the

year of the outbreak of the Kosovo war, Bujar and five actors worked on a production called "Games in the Backyard" after a play by Edna Mazyna. The rehearsal space was located right next to a refugee camp. It was very strenuous for them to see the refugees spending their lives under intolerable circumstances. So they decided to put the play aside and started organizing activities for the children in the camp to alleviate their daily plight. Later on they called their organization Loja after the play they intended to stage at that time. The first projects derived from the idea to bring together Turkish, Albanian, Serbian and Macedonian children and adolescents and they mainly took place in the villages around Tetovo. Education and Culture are the main objectives today as well as the desire for ethnical collaboration and international cooperation.

## Anything but what you expect

In 2010, Silke just wanted to get out of the artificial Berlin, as she calls it. She had great interest in the Balkans. When she read about the call for applications for the "Robert Bosch Cultural Manager" programme, she applied for Loja. She said that she would have rather gone to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia or Croatia because she was more familiar with those countries, but as a Balkan fan she was also curious about Tetovo. "I studied Fine Arts and the job specifications mentioned that they needed someone with experiences in the field of media, because the institution was planning on initiating some projects in the area." Silke started to implement projects of the house and her own ideas and to apply for funding. Her first



project was a poetry slam-workshop in cooperation with the German-Iranian slammer and artist Michel Abdollahi from Hamburg and participants from Priština, Skopje and Tetovo – all three geographically very close together, but worlds apart. Projects in the areas of photography, video art and theatre were to follow. Silke's biggest project so far has been an exhibition with eight video artists from Romania, Moldova, Germany, Palestine and Iran. "We wanted to work with people who are addressing the issue of borders and how they can be overcome, separated cities – all current problems in Tetovo and therefore relevant.

#### Two worlds colliding on 20 square kilometres

Silke moved to Tetovo without knowing the town beforehand. At the beginning she found the people rather "unfriendly, uncommunicative and closed up". When she moved into her flat, her neighbours refused to greet her, although she had wished them a "Good Morning", once in Turkish, once in Albanian, because she was not sure which language was appropriate. According to her, people gave her critical glances. "I did not know to whom I was supposed to speak Albanian and to whom Macedonian. I had the impression, that I did everything wrong no matter how hard and what I tried." In the meantime she claims to have learned how to distinguish the people. She knows now in which street the Albanians are living and in which part of the town the Macedonians. "It does not really mingle. All hold a lot of prejudice against each other and depending on with who you are out and about, you will hear that Macedonians keep their shoes on, that they are dirty, or that the Albanians are extremely traditional. In most cases the others are the bad guys", Silke says. The ethnic separation is most evident during football matches. There are three teams in Tetovo. All three play in the first league. Silke and one friend went to see two games. They were the only women in the stadium. "It was funny in a way. The people around us also found it funny. When football games take place, there is heated atmosphere. The town is full of police. One wrong word and a brawl starts.

You hear them scream "Greater Albania!", "Down with the Macedonians!", or "Burn the whores!". They even throw stones at their own team. Apart from that, in everyday life, all is extremely separated." That Silke cycles through Tetovo is yet another mark of distinction. "So far I have not seen another single woman riding a bike. I had to listen to a lot of sayings, even though my colleague maintains that women here have bikes." Although Silke has met some great people in Tetovo, she did not make real friendships there. Most of her acquaintances are men, because women of her age are married and rather stay at home. Most of the weddings in Tetovo take place in July, the time when the emigrated – many of them live in Germany – return home.

#### Back to Berlin

Silke's fellowship in Macedonia is planned to terminate in summer 2012, which she considers a good thing. Until then she is organizing a film festival, and she has started looking for a local successor to prolong the existence of the position. "I realize how much I learned during the past year, how much I could experiment in various fields. A year of relative freedom to implement my own ideas; I never had these opportunities in Berlin. But I also notice that I miss going to exhibitions or meeting artists. At the moment I do not know what comes after my stay here. Maybe I make art." Yet, her interest and pleasure in the Balkans has not disappeared. Knowing herself, Silke admits, she might be leaving Germany again in one or two year's time. "In the long term, I enjoy being here and there for a certain amount of time", she says.

I am leaving Tetovo in the late afternoon. I am travelling via Skopje. Its large buildings and monuments in the centre tell new stories about old times. But that is another story.

# Who is representing culture in Macedonia?

Macedonia, similar to other countries in the Balkans, still is in a process of transformation characterized by many reforms and efforts to adjust its laws and regulations to European norms.

By KSENIJA ČOČKOVA, photos by ADRIAN PİCLIŞAN



Macedonia is a relatively young country, which was able to regain its independence peacefully after Yugoslavia ceased to exist in 1991. On 22nd March 2004, Macedonia applied for membership in the European Union and was granted the status of candidate country in April the same year. On 29th January 2008, Macedonia signed the memorandum for participation in the EU programme “Culture 2007-2013”. The strategy of the Republic of Macedonia for the integration in the EU reads as follows: “The cultural policy as part of the social politics in the scope of the reform processes in Macedonia is orientated to the preservation of authenticity, the support of cultural identity and the standards, regulations and criteria of the EU. The establishing and support of cultural identity, the support of cultural diversity of the communities in the country and the cultural industry are as equally important to the cultural policy of the Republic of Macedonia as the protection of cultural heritage in the country’s territory regardless of its historical epoch or culture.”<sup>1</sup>

Although Macedonia was not involved in the wars between the successor states of former Yugoslavia, a civil war between the ethnic Macedonian and Albanian population blazed up in 2001. It ended when the basic agreement of Ohrid was signed a few months later. This treaty acknowledges that Macedonia is a multi-ethnic country in which, next to the ethnical Macedonians, other minorities are living, the largest group being the ethnical Albanians with 25 percent of the total population. Statutory rights and claims are protected by the basic agreement. It implies that cultures and different ethnicities are being supported,

but it also advocates the interethnic cohabitation that is supposed to lead to better understanding and mutual appreciation.

With regard to laws and regulations, Macedonia shows progress in the process of pre-accession of complying with EU norms. But the reality also shows significant problems, which have not only to do with the implementation and interpretation of laws, but also with a clear definition of the roles of cultural and political operators.

## The Cultural Ministry and the politicized cultural policy

Since 1945, the state has been the only “mentor” of culture and has remained in this role until today – it proposes, it chooses, it assesses, it finances – all without any plan, strategy, actual programme, competent research and vision for the demands of the republic in cultural matters.<sup>2</sup>

The Ministry of Culture awards annual grants for “projects of national interest”. However, the strategy to define national interests in culture has not been developed any further since 2008. All state-run and municipal cultural institutions as well as non-governmentally funded organizations and independent artist compete in those invitations to tender. The Ministry of Culture with its internal boards determines who will receive how much subsidies and whether a project is in line with the national interest. This means there is no transparent or verifiable strategy as to what should count as being of national interest at a particular time. In the absence of other funding bodies it is almost exclusively the respon-

sibility of representatives of the state themselves who define by courtesy of promoting culture what culture is and which cultural project can be realized. Furthermore, the ministry itself often acts as the organizer, publisher and commissioner of art works. Thus, the role of the Ministry of Culture, respectively the state as an institution for the promotion of culture and important cultural operator, is vague. But at the same time the Macedonian government has a strong and direct influence on the organization of culture in the country.

Another point is the exploitation of culture according to the affiliation with the political parties. After each parliamentary election, the leaders of the state-funded cultural institutions are being replaced, whereby most positions are filled with representatives from the two major governing parties, one Macedonian and one Albanian. In terms of staffing, belonging to the political party in power is more important than competence. Moreover, the frequent changes at the top of the most decisive cultural institutions impair their effectiveness and sustainability. So belonging to the right political party is an important factor, if you want your project funded by the Ministry of Culture. Other organizations and cultural operators will receive the leftovers of the cake, if anything at all. For the last few years, a certain tendency has been established, that each applicant gets a part of the sum applied for, so that no one has a reason to accuse the ministry of partisanship. On the one hand this means, that quantity has taken precedence over quality and on the other that nothing will change in terms of favouring creatives close to the governing parties by giving them higher subsidies.

#### Skopje 2014 and the antique finish of culture

In 2010, works for the so-called project “Skopje 2014” have commenced. It was initiated by the conservative governing party VMRO-DPMNE and it is to let the Macedonian capital Skopje shine in new splendour. More than 20 buildings are to have new facades or are to be erected until 2014. The common features for all shall derive from the architectural style of the Baroque époque. In addition, several monuments have been planned. All construction projects are concentrated in the city centre.<sup>3</sup>

The modern face of Skopje evolved after the devastating earthquake in 1963. In its wake the Japanese architect Kenzo Tanga envisioned the re-erection of Skopje as the most modern city in Europe. However, the current government does not take any interest in urban development of the city, but focuses on the re-invention of Macedonian history by wanting to give the city an antique finish. Obviously, their cultural policy is backward-looking and its target is to create a Macedonian identity that allegedly has ancient roots. The expenses necessitated by this single project are constantly seen to increase and they are diminishing the funds available for contemporary culture.

#### Great expectations: non-governmental organizations in the cultural sector

After the collapse of Yugoslavia and the ensuing civil wars, many foreign foundations got financially involved in Macedonia. This was mainly to help establishing and strengthen civil society. Many NGOs, some of them working in the cultural sector, were founded and they are still operating, even though most of the foreign foundations have withdrawn from Macedonia. These independent organizations have played a vital role in the opening of Macedonian culture and its presentation abroad. They also invited cultural operators to Macedonia. Their projects are still and primarily funded by foreign funds, and the people active in the NGOs have gained sound knowledge as cultural managers. Currently there is a movement in Macedonia to promote an initiative for the founding of an institutionalized NGO-network that will have more influence on and greater legitimacy to the state and that should encourage the Ministry of Culture to use the expertise of this network in matters related to the country’s cultural policy.



1 National strategy of the Republic of Macedonia for integration in the EU, 2004, Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Department for European Integration

2 Teodosievski, Zlatko (2008): Neither culture nor politics. In: Good Administration, [http://gg.org.mk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=169:e-bilten-mart-2008&catid=43:e-bilten&Itemid=103](http://gg.org.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=169:e-bilten-mart-2008&catid=43:e-bilten&Itemid=103)

3 More information about Skopje 2014: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/gallery/skopje-2014>; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iybmt-iLysU>

# Educational concepts for international cultural managers?

There are many educational paths future cultural managers can choose from: universities, academies or private courses and advanced training. But do these offers really meet the requirements of the professional life?

By GESA BIRNKRAUT

The occupational tasks of cultural managers span the whole width of the polarity between the local and global market: Working for a municipal theatre, whose target audience is the local community with no international exchange means working in a classical local market. On the other hand, a children's circus company drawing inspiration from international festivals and also touring both nationally and internationally clearly is part of the global market. Both models equally have their justification, but do cultural managers need the same kind of competence and knowledge when they will work in such vastly different fields and markets?

Basically these differences will always exist. Nevertheless, it becomes clear that the gap decreases, and that international networks for independent and privately funded as well as for municipal organizations become ever more important.

Courses of studies and apprenticeships for cultural managers should prepare their students for both cases. They should play a vital role in sensitizing future cultural managers to both intercultural, international and to local conditions.

However, reality is different: Let's take a look at the case of a Baltic cultural manager who came to Germany for a year after finishing her international postgraduate degree. She is facing intercultural difficulties in the new market, which even her international MA could not prepare for. Within one year, she grows on the new challenges with such rapidity and increases her competences, which will exceed the experiences gained on the national market by many times. When returning after one year, she

again faces difficulties: this time in the market of her home country in terms of employability, her own professional acceptance, and the use of her acquired skills.

How can we overcome these difficulties? In order to make specific demands on and draw conclusions from existing educational concepts and to arrive at a differentiated perspective on things, we need to take a glance at individual careers and the cultural market in general:

## Effects on the individual careers of the cultural managers

It still appears as a professional disadvantage to have worked or to work abroad for some time, at least in most European countries, because people incur the danger of the personal network on the domestic market deteriorating in times of absence. On the other hand the development of individual competences is accelerated, if compared with those of cultural managers who stayed in their respective country. Nevertheless the latter are much more likely to climb the steps on their career ladder in a linear fashion. The cultural managers return with increased skills, but can at best return to their place in the cultural market where s/he had left it regardless of the experiences they gained abroad and of their contribution to the individual development.

**Conclusions:** Young cultural managers who are spending time abroad in the international employment market still have to bear in mind, that they break with the linear career developments of their colleagues who stay in their home country. This car-

ries chances, but it also entails risks for one the life and the career trajectory of the individual. An intensive analysis of the potentials and obstacles that might emerge from that situation and the appropriate advanced training offered by the institutions responsible for the international working visits seems to be required. This should also address the two themes "education" and the "maintenance of social networks".

## Effects on the cultural market

This development is a positive factor on the cultural market as such: the market and the institutions will doubtlessly benefit from internationally experienced cultural managers. In an increasingly global culture with even local markets confronted with issues of different national backgrounds and migration, managers with intercultural experience are becoming valuable agents of change. At the same time this means that managers should acquire their experiences not exclusively on the local market, but also should refresh their knowledge about local habits and customs.

**Conclusions:** Experience in the international realm have to be regarded as vital when it comes to the full range of competences that are crucial on any local market as well. On the other hand internationally experienced staff needs to be trained to comply with the requirements existing on particular local markets. This can only be achieved if authorities on the cultural market change their minds. Constant discussion and impulses they provide are valuable methods to bring the subject to the centre of attention, and can thus help to enforce these features on the market.

## Effects on training concepts

The educational concepts in cultural management have undergone changes in the past few years, away from the attitude of training students to act as mere cultural administrators in public cultural institutions towards increased entrepreneurial thinking and acting as cultural managers in today's open markets. This development will be intensified by factors such as a growing global market and the increasing significance of the independent project scene and the cul-

tural and creative economy. This change requires further strengthening. A focus on combining theory and practical experience with an international and global emphasis will be essential. Topics such as lobbying and network theories have to be integrated into the curricula. The internationalization and globalization of cultural management needs to be addressed with respect to the effects on markets and careers.

**Conclusion:** Not only the content needs to be adjusted to the requirements of global developments, but also the background and experiences of the teaching staff. The first generation of professors who taught cultural management mainly came from a humanistic or economically related background. The succeeding generation of teachers and trainers has their own biography as cultural managers in theory and practice. This has to be reflected in the educational concepts. One possibility of implementation might be an increased focus on different and individual markets and /or conditions; another will be an increased analysis of the internationalization of the market and its impacts on the practice of cultural management. It is open to discussion to what extent the authorities are willing and able to deal with the current challenges of a competence jump due to international / intercultural experiences of their students and make adjustments to already existing educational concepts at universities.

One thing is certain: as long as the story of the Baltic cultural manager reflects the experience of a majority of the cultural managers seeking international experiences, the gap between the local and international market still remains. But for how much longer can the cultural markets in Germany and other European countries afford to maintain such a gap?



# Tap into cultural markets: Europe's cultural plan from 2014

For several years, the European Union has been directly and indirectly supporting and funding the mobility of cultural operators. Now, the focus has moved towards the support of creativity. Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, talks about Creative Europe, the new framework programme for the cultural and creative sectors (2014-2020) and the role mobility can play for artists and cultural managers.

Interview by Antje Kohlrusch and Ciprian Marinescu

*Creative Europe is the new proposal for the EU programme dedicated to the cultural and creative sectors. Who is Creative Europe or, better still, who can be the Creative Europe?*

Creative Europe would target organizations and individuals whose activities are based on cultural values and/or artistic and creative expressions. Thousands of cultural organizations will be supported by the programme and they in their turn will help more than 300,000 artists and cultural professionals to work across national borders. The programme will support the translation of an estimated 5,500 books, which would enable readers to enjoy foreign books in their mother tongue. It would also support film producers, distributors and more than 2,500 cinemas across Europe and facilitate the distribution of more than 1,000 European films. This means, that the programme would promote cultural and linguistic diversity and contribute to growth by supplying jobs, sustainable growth and social inclusion. So ultimately we are all Creative Europe!

*From what cultural sector does the term "Creative Europe" come from?*

The term "Creative Europe" puts the spotlight on Europe's great cultural and creative potential. Our proposal covers a range of sectors, including archives and libraries, artistic crafts, audiovisual (including film, television, video games and multimedia), cultural heritage, design, festivals, performing arts, publishing, radio and visual arts. These sectors all combine

creativity, skill and talent and they offer a potential for jobs and growth by generating intellectual property and appropriating it.

*Creativity and innovation – in order to reach these two goals, cultural actors need freedom of movement and stimulation. In terms of mobility, where do you think those would fit?*

Mobility increases culture's contribution to creativity by fostering wider access to cultural resources. It contributes to the development of artistic and professional skills, opens up new market opportunities and enhances career possibilities. As creative talent circulates across borders, there are more opportunities for cross-cultural co-productions and co-operations. The mobility of artists and cultural professionals is essential for the cultural and creative industries in Europe. Mobility can also create new market opportunities through schemes, which improve industry export strategies, promote international job placement schemes or reinforce capacity building. Mobility for cultural practitioners has been relatively limited and we are working to remove the barriers. The Creative Europe-programme will be an important part of this.

*What would be the European dimension of mobility?*

The mobility of artists and culture professionals has been a Commission priority for a long time, which has resulted in one of the three objectives of the current culture programme. There is considerable added

value at the European level in this area. For example, the Commission is working to improve access to information, increased policy coordination and increased opportunities for cross-border exchanges.

*Which European programmes are directed towards the mobility of cultural managers?*

The mobility of cultural practitioners is one of three key objectives of the culture programme. Thanks to this programme approximately 20,000 artists and cultural professionals will receive support to develop international careers every year. In addition, the programme enables 1,000 cultural organisations each year to work together across borders. An evaluation shows that the programme has strengthened the cultural and creative sector and promoted circulation of professionals and works of art. Given the relatively small – on average € 57 million per year – budget this is a remarkable achievement!

*What do you expect the result of mobility programmes to be, in concrete terms?*

Mobility is an important part of the artists' and other cultural professionals' work. It allows them to find new sources for inspiration, advance their professional careers, partnerships and networking, step into new markets and expand their audiences. But as I have already mentioned, the impact of cultural mobility extends beyond the individual artists and their audiences – there are significant benefits for society in terms of innovation, job creation and economic growth. Therefore, we are working to improve the quality of mobility for both EU and non-EU nationals, as well as the total number of cultural professionals who have an opportunity to gain international experience. Creative Europe would provide mobility opportunities for hundreds of thousands cultural operators who then would be able to reach audiences and markets outside their own country.

*To what extent do we need specific mobility programmes for cultural managers?*

As you may know, the Commission carried out a pilot project on artist mobility in 2008 and 2009. The aim of this pilot project was to provide an overview of the mobility schemes that already exist in Europe, to identify existing gaps and to test new ideas in view of the preparation of the new generation of programmes. It covered the mobility not only of artists, but of a wide range of cultural professionals, including cultural managers. In this framework, we launched amongst others two calls for proposals in order to support the mobility of cultural professionals. We received nearly 140 applications. One of the conclusions was that almost all applications could have fitted in our culture programme. What was needed was clearly not a radical transformation of the programme or the creation of specific schemes, but focused improvements to tackle existing imbalances in the mobility. We also wanted to promote a more developmental approach to mobility, giving a larger space to the dialogue and the interaction with local artists and communities. This is exactly what Creative Europe would do. It promises to be the most cost-effective solution, and the one we believe would yield the greatest results.

*How would you define mobility, when we talk about globalization?*

Globalization is often perceived only as a threat to cultural and artistic production and expression. But in fact, culture mobility can be instrumental in responding to the global challenges we are facing today. The international mobility of artists and culture professionals is crucial for cultural and linguistic diversity and intercultural dialogue. The EU is committed to developing a more active role for European culture in international relations and to integrating the cultural dimension as in Europe's dealings with partner countries and regions. Working in a global context allows artists to network and to form partnerships across national and European borders. With the right support, globalization may be an advantage for cultural and creative industries.

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